

## The Letters of Franklin K. Lane

### LANE SAID ROOSEVELT EDUCATED THE PEOPLE

Declared Colonel Created New Consciousness of Democracy—Did Not Find Taft Disloyal to Policies, but Lacking Popular Touch—Roosevelt Wrote He Didn't Want to Be President Again.

THE NEW YORK HERALD publishes herewith another installment of the letters and diaries written by Franklin K. Lane while Secretary of the Interior in the cabinet of President Wilson. These letters form a highly valuable contribution to history. They will appear in THE NEW YORK HERALD every day until the series is completed.

TWELFTH INSTALLMENT.  
(Copyright 1922 by Anne W. Lane.)

In the letter that follows Mr. Lane, in 1913, tells of his formal entry into politics in 1898.

WASHINGTON, December 30, 1913.

DEAR MR. SPURGEON—In reply to your inquiry of December 29, permit me to say that I got into politics in this way:

One day, while on my way to lunch, I met Mayor Phelan of San Francisco, who asked me if I would become a member of the committee to draft a charter for the city. I said I would, and was appointed. At that time I was practicing law and had no idea whatever that I would at any time run for public office or take any considerable part in public affairs. I helped to draft the charter, and as it had to be submitted to the people for ratification I stamped the city for it. Later, when the first election was held under it, my friends on the charter committee insisted that I should accept the Democratic nomination for City Attorney.

Under the charter the City Attorney was the legal adviser of all the city and county officials, and it was his business to define and construe the organic law, and the friends of the charter wished some one who was in sympathy with the instrument to give it initial construction.

I was nominated by the Democratic party by an independent movement and was elected; later reelected, and elected for a third term. After an unsuccessful candidacy for the Governorship, I was appointed a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission by President Roosevelt. Cordially yours, FRANKLIN K. LANE.

#### On Taft's Election.

On the election of Taft as President Mr. Lane comments:

February 13, 1909.

The Harriman crowd seems to think that they will all be on good terms with Taft, but unless I'm mistaken in the man they will be greatly fooled.

Have you noticed that nice point of constitutional law, dug up by a newspaper reporter, which renders Knox ineligible as Secretary of State? He voted for an increase in the salary of the Secretary of State three years ago. They will try to avoid the effect of the constitutional inhibition by repealing the act increasing the salary. Technically this won't do Knox any good, although it will probably be upheld by the courts, if the matter is ever taken into the courts.

Roosevelt is very nervous these days, but as he said to me the other day, "They know that I am President right up to March 4th."

#### Roosevelt and Taft.

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1909.

No one yet knows from Mr. Taft's line of policy what kind of a President he will make. Everybody is giving him the benefit of the doubt. The thing I find that hangs over all Presidents and other public men here to terrify them is the fear of bad times. The greatness of Roosevelt lay, in a sense, in his recklessness. These people undoubtedly have the power to bring on panics whenever they want to and to depress business, and they will exercise that power as against any administration that does not play their game, and the "money power," as we used to call it, allows the President and Congress a certain scope—a field within which it may move, but if it goes outside that field and follows policies or demands measures which interfere with the game as played by the high financiers, they do not hesitate to use their "big stick," which is the threat of business depression.

#### Lane to Roosevelt.

WASHINGTON, April 29, 1910.

My dear Mr. Roosevelt: Mr. Kellogg tells me that he expects to see you in Europe, and I avail myself of his offer to carry a word of welcome to you, inasmuch as I must leave for Europe the day after your arrival in New York, the President having appointed me as a delegate to the International Railway Congress at Bern.

The country is awaiting you anxiously—not out of mere curiosity to

united party and under circumstances the most flattering do not accept it unless you are convinced of two things: (1) that you are needed from a national standpoint and not merely from a party standpoint; (2) that you are certain of election.

Sacrifice for one's country is splendid, but sacrifice for one's party is foolish. You must feel assured before acceding to the call, which I believe will certainly come, that it is sufficiently strong to overcome the trend toward Democratic success. If I were asked I would say that I think both of these conditions are present—that the desire to have you again is much broader than any party, and so large that it would insure your victory; but no man is as wise a judge of these things as the man himself whose fortunes are at stake.

Thanking you again for the pleasure of a luncheon, believe me, as always, Faithfully yours,

FRANKLIN K. LANE.

#### Roosevelt Confidential.

Roosevelt in a letter marked private and confidential replied:

"That is a really kind and friendly letter from you, and I appreciate it. Now I agree absolutely with you that I have no business under any circumstances to accept any such call, even in the greatly improbable event of its coming, unless I am convinced that the need is national, a need of the people and not merely a need of the party. But as for considering my own chances in any such event, my dear fellow, I simply would not know how to go about it.

"I am always credited with far more political sagacity than I really possess. I act purely on public grounds and then this proves often to be good policy, too. I assure you with all possible sincerity that I have not thought and am not thinking of the nomination, and that under no circumstances would I in the remotest degree plan to bring about my nomination.

"I do not want to be President again, I am not a candidate, I have not the slightest idea of becoming a candidate, and I do not for one moment believe that any such condition of affairs will arise that would make it necessary to consider me accepting the nomination. But as for the effect upon my own personal fortunes, I would not know how to consider it, because I would not have the vaguest idea what the effect would be, except that according to my own view it could not but be bad and unpleasant for me personally.

"From the personal standpoint I should view the nomination to the Presidency as a real and serious misfortune. Nothing would persuade me to take it, unless it appeared that the people really wished me to do a given job, which I could not honorably shirk.

The thirteenth installment of Mr. Lane's letters will appear in THE NEW YORK HERALD to-morrow.

#### THREE OVERCOME WHEN SEAL LEAVES GAS TANK

Try to Shut Off Fluid in Purifying Plant.

Three employees of the purifying plant of the Standard Gas Light Company at 115th street and the East River, were overcome by gas last night when a seal blew off a tank. They were Bartholomew Barry, 57, of 69 Bradhurst avenue, the foreman, and Patrick Bradshaw, 51, of 406 Pleasant avenue, and Anthony Longo, 61, of 2234 First avenue, laborers.

When the seal blew off under heavy pressure the three men tried to shut off the gas. They were the only occupants of the plant. Bradshaw crawled to the door and called for help. Workers in nearby buildings rescued the three. Bradshaw was revived with a pump. Barry and Longo were removed to Harlem Hospital.

#### Roosevelt to Lane.

From Berlin Lane received from Theodore Roosevelt, dated May 13, 1910, these lines:

"I think your letter most interesting. As far as I can judge you have most sized up the situation right. With hearty good wishes, Faithfully yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

#### Suggestion to Roosevelt.

WASHINGTON, December 20, 1911.

My dear Colonel: I have been thinking over what I said yesterday, and I am going to presume upon my friendship and, I may say, my affection for you to make a suggestion: Even though the call comes from a

## UPSETS MRS. GIBSON'S STORY OF HALL-MILLS TRAGEDY

Continued from First Page.

to-night after he arrived from New York. It is the move that was referred to yesterday as the attempt to "blow Mrs. Gibson out of the water."

#### Mrs. Russell's Affidavit.

Mr. Pfeiffer produced the affidavit of Mrs. Russell, which reads as follows: "Nellie Lo Russell, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

"That she is 33 years of age; that she resides on Churchill avenue in the county of Somerset, State of New Jersey, and that the said place of residence is a short distance back of the farm occupied by Jane Gibson, near Hamilton road, in the said county and State, and that deponent has resided at said place since the 15th day of March, 1921; that she has known the said Jane Gibson since about the said 15th day of March, 1921, and has from time to time visited the said Jane Gibson at her said farm, and that the said Jane Gibson has from time to time visited at the place of residence of deponent;

"That on the 14th day of September, 1922, deponent returned from her work in the city of New York to her said place of residence at about 8 P. M.; that about 9:45 P. M. deponent went to bed; that a few minutes before 10 P. M. on the said day deponent looked at her alarm clock and observed the time and then would the own chances in any such event, my dear fellow, I simply would not know how to go about it.

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#### Fingerprint Me and End Suspicion, Says Mills

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J., Nov. 12.—James Mills, husband of the Rev. Edward W. Hall here September 14, said to-day:

"I would like nothing better than to have my fingerprints compared with those found on Mr. Hall's shirt. I know that I have been suspected of this crime. I am absolutely innocent, and I feel that a comparison of the fingerprints would reveal that."

time during which Mrs. Gibson has sworn she rode on her mule down De Russes lane looking for a corn thief; saw the figures in the glare of automobile headlights come into the lane and turn toward the crabapple tree; saw the flash of a pistol and heard a woman scream and saw two of four figures fall to the ground. In other words, the Russell statement is declared to destroy the Gibson evidence in its entirety.

Mr. Pfeiffer was ready with information as to who Mrs. Russell is. She resided in East Orange, he said, until 1907, when she went to the Chautauqua school of nursing at Jamestown, N. Y. She completed a course there and nursed in several places until 1916, when she returned to East-Orange. On May 9, 1916, she married Albert J. Russell in the City Hall, Trenton. Her maiden name was Reed. The couple moved to New York. Her husband, she told Mr. Pfeiffer, stripped her apartment while she was out working and she left him. Since then she has been working in dressmaking establishments in New York, commuting from this city.

She gave the lawyer the names of three or four former employers, and these, Mr. Pfeiffer says, he has checked. He also telephoned the school at Jamestown and verified the fact that as Miss Reed she had completed a course there, as she said.

Her story, according to Mr. Pfeiffer, came to his attention through a letter she wrote to Mrs. Hall, widow of the dead rector. This letter was dated November 7, and read:

"Mrs. Frances Stevens Hall—Madam: In regards to September 14, Mrs. Jane Gibson was not at the Phillips farm at 10 o'clock, as I live back of her, and she came over at 10, or a little before, to tell me she had taken my dog from a man on Hamilton road. She sat on the steps of my little shanty while I gave her one dollar for keeping my dog. Then I went with her home and got the dog. We talked a little while and I came home about 11 o'clock. She told me that she had waited till all had gone to bed before she came. She has told me things that was not so. I don't think she can help it."

"Sincerely yours,

"NELLIE L. RUSSELL,  
"General Delivery, New Brunswick."

This letter was badly misspelled, and there were other evidences of a lack of education on the part of the writer. Mr. Pfeiffer had stopped at Newark on his way here from New York and had shown the affidavit to Mr. Mott and Mr. Maspin. After Pfeiffer had made the affidavit public Mr. Mott was communicated with. He said: "Yes, Mr. Pfeiffer came to my home and turned over to me an affidavit such as you describe. I will have it investigated. Mr. Pfeiffer has a perfect right to conduct his case as he sees fit and I have a perfect right to conduct my case as I see fit."

"Don't you think that this affidavit seriously attacks the credibility of Mrs. Gibson?" Mr. Mott was asked. He replied, "I am not going to say anything about the credibility of Mrs. Gibson or the credibility of any witness."

"But you were quoted the other day as saying that in your estimation Mrs. Gibson's story stood up."

"I have been quoted in the newspapers for a lot of things I never said," Mr. Mott reiterated that he would make no statement regarding the credibility of any witness. He then announced that instead of coming to New Brunswick

In the morning he would go to Somerset.

Late to-night, Mrs. Gibson, who is still being guarded by State troopers, was reached by telephone and informed of the statements made by Mrs. Russell. Mrs. Gibson seemed quite excited at first. She said: "Are you kidding me?" Then she listened carefully while she was told that Mr. Pfeiffer had made public the affidavit of Mrs. Russell and had given a copy to Mr. Mott.

Mrs. Gibson hesitated a minute and then said, "I have nothing further to say." With that she hung up the receiver.

The story of Mrs. Hanlon, told on Long Island and relayed here, was so full of small holes that it never was given much credence, even in relation to a case in which the seemingly impossible has happened several times. Her description of the Phillips farmhouse was fairly good in the main.

However no sheets were in the house when it was opened after the murder and no sign indicated that the beds had been made for months. No rosy was hanging on a doorknob and it seemed impossible for Mrs. Hanlon to have recovered her beads eight weeks later, as she was reported as saying she did. For the reason that souvenir hunters had stripped the place of everything, including rugs, stools, chairs and pictures. That a rosy could have been overlooked was regarded as preposterous.

Third, too, it was not the lamp in the hall that had oil in it but the lamp in the front room to the west, when the detectives entered. The other lamps were empty. All lamps but the hall lamp, however, have been taken by the pillagers, so it seemed, while the story was under investigation, that Mrs. Hanlon based her narrative on the condition of the house as it is now or was last Thursday, rather than on its condition on the night of the murder.

While it might have been possible for Mrs. Hanlon to hide behind the piano, she would have had to move the instrument to get behind it, and from there she could not have seen the crab-apple tree—not by some hundreds of feet. In fact, the tree is hidden from the house by a heavy growth of locust. Various other discrepancies were pointed out. Mr. Mott earlier said much the same thing. He pointed out that Mrs. Mills was in the habit of doing her own work at home, and it was hardly likely she would employ a woman at the very high rate of \$15 a day to care, twice a month, for a resting place she obviously would not want any one to know of, and that, if such a woman were needed, she should have come from such a distance also seemed incredible, said Mr. Mott. Two or three times while discussing the story Mr. Mott exclaimed: "Peculiar, isn't it?"

However, Mr. Mott said he would send to see Mrs. Hanlon but he lacks power to call her before the Grand Jury, as she is out of his jurisdiction. He said her story would be investigated, but this was before the reputation of it came from Mrs. Hanlon herself.

While Mrs. Hanlon's story had great weaknesses, it was considered important before the reputation, for the reason that at the trial she would have made a star witness for the defense, offsetting Mrs. Gibson and rendering her story, on which the prosecution would be relying to convict the "woman in gray," valueless.

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#### CRIES SHE'S SWALLOWED HER AL SMITH BUTTON

Rushed to Hospital, but X-Ray Shows Nothing.

Veronica Fleming, who is 11 years old, ran into the living room of her home at 440 East Fourteenth street yesterday and shouted:

"Mamma! Mamma! What do you think I've done?"

"What have you done?" her mother inquired.

"Mamma, I swallowed my Al Smith button," the child said, "and I don't feel very well."

The girl was hustled in a taxicab to Bellevue Hospital, where surgeons examined her and X-rayed her, but could find nothing in her interior that resembled an Al Smith button or even a disconsolate Republican button. So she went back home with her parents, but still insisted that she had swallowed Al Smith.

"I had the button," she said, "and I put it in my mouth, and then I didn't have it any more."

#### JEALOUS GIRL WOUNDS SWEETHEART AT PARTY

Waitress Plies Potato Knife, Wounded Man As He Left.

Miss Jennie Fletcher, 28, a waitress, of 204 East Thirtieth street, jealous because her sweetheart, John Gilhooly, 30, of 337 East Twenty-fourth street, was paying attention to other girls at a party, stabbed Gilhooly with a potato knife at the residence of John Campbell at 228 East Twenty-sixth street last night, according to the police.

Gilhooly left without saying anything to other guests concerning the stabbing and collapsed in the street. After he had been removed to Bellevue Hospital, where it was found that the knife had penetrated his right lung, Gilhooly is said to have identified Miss Fletcher as his assailant and she was arrested on a charge of felonious assault.

#### JEWISH RUMMAGE SALE OPENS.

The women's division of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies will begin a rummage sale this morning at the Garment Center Capitol, 22 West Thirty-sixth street.

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